

CHRIST THE KING CHURCH, WIMBLEDON PARK

PARISH FINANCE APPEAL – APRIL 2024

I am a member of the finance committee here at Christ the King and I have been asked to speak to you about the church finances.

First of all, I would like to thank all the parishioners who already support the parish so generously both in terms of time and money. We are very grateful to you.

We are all aware of how high inflation has been over the last couple of years and the effect it has had on our personal budgets. I am afraid the church is no different. Last year, for the first time in over twenty years our day-to-day expenditure exceeded our income.

Fortunately, we do have some reserves, but this position is not sustainable in the longer term.

As many of you know, we had a nursery tenant in our hall for several years. They unfortunately terminated their contract earlier than planned and so we have had no hall tenant since Easter 2023, although we are hoping to finalising a contract with another nursery who will occupy the hall from September 2024. This lack of rental income over the last 12 months has contributed to the parish's current financial situation.

Catholic parishes are expected to be self-financing. We have to pay for all the expenses incurred in running the parish. Parishes in poor areas may receive some help from the diocese but in an affluent area such as Wimbledon Park, we are expected to pay our way and to make a sizeable contribution towards the expenses of the diocese. Failure to do so, may put the future of our church in jeopardy.

Last year, our total offertory collection was £66,000. Of this, £48,000 or 73%, was gift aided, and as a result, we received an additional £14,000 from the government, bringing our parish income for the year to approximately £80,000. Our biggest expense was the levy that we pay to the diocese to support the work that they do, including training priests, helping poor parishes, safeguarding, services for children and young people and looking after retired priests. In 2023, our payment to the diocese amounted to over £33,000. In addition, our heating and lighting bill was nearly £20,000, so you can see how quickly the money disappears.

Today, I am appealing to three groups of parishioners. Firstly, to the 63 parishioners who already make gift aided payments to Christ the King by weekly or monthly standing order. Over the last four years, less than ten parishioners have increased their standing order to the church and some standing orders have remained the same for many years. What may

have seemed generous ten or fifteen years ago would not now buy a couple of take-away coffees each week. We are asking you to reconsider the amount that you give to the church and to increase it if you possibly can. Changes to standing orders can be made through online banking or by completing one of the forms at the back of the church and returning it to the parish office.

The second group I am appealing to are parishioners who have signed up for gift aid but prefer to use envelopes. Again, I am asking if you would consider increasing the weekly amount you give to the church. Might you also be prepared to set up a standing order instead, which helps us because we have less cash to take to the bank and means that you do not have to fill several envelopes at once if you have been absent for a few weeks.

Finally, a word to those who put money in the plate or use the card machine and have not signed up for gift aid. Please consider doing so now. If you are a UK taxpayer, the church can claim from the government an additional 25p for every £1 you put in the church collection, and this is at no cost to yourself. The government is simply paying back to the church the income tax you have already paid. For people who do not wish to make a regular contribution to the church or have forgotten their envelope, there are white envelopes at the back of the church which can be used for one-off gift aided donations.

Higher rate taxpayers can also claim further tax back and I am happy to explain this to anyone who is interested.

Please do think about what I have said and thank you for listening.

Margaret Pedder

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